R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 020 248 UD 005 700

EXCERPTS FROM REPORT BY NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE EDUCATION OF DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN.

NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNC.ON THE EDUC.OF DISADV.CHIL
NEW YORK STATE TEACHERS ASSN., ALBANY
REPORT NUMBER EOP-66-67--C PUB DATE 15 FEB 67
EDRS PRICE MF-$0.25 HC-$0.64 14P.

DESCRIPTORS- *DISADVANTAGED YOUTH, *TEACHER ATTITUDES, *SUMMER PROGRAMS, *FEDERAL PROGRAMS, *TEACHER IMPROVEMENT, INSERVICE TEACHER EDUCATION, STUDENT TEACHER RELATIONSHIP, CHANGING ATTITUDES, EVALUATION, SCHOOL INTEGRATION, COMPENSATORY EDUCATION PROGRAMS, LANGUAGE EXPERIENCE APPROACH, INFORMATION DISSEMINATION, BUSINESS RESPONSIBILITY, EDUCATIONAL IMPROVEMENT, ESEA TITLE 1

IN DISCUSSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT TITLE I PROGRAMS, THIS REPORT INDICATES THAT THE ATTITUDES OF TEACHERS TOWARDS THEIR DISADVANTAGED PUPILS ARE CRUCIAL IN HELPING THESE CHILDREN TO LEARN. SINCE TEACHERS' ATTITUDES OFTEN REFLECT THE NEGATIVE ATTITUDES OF SOCIETY, INSERVICE PROGRAMS SHOULD DEVELOP IN TEACHERS CONSTRUCTIVE ATTITUDES ABOUT THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH AND RESPONSIBILITY TO THE DISADVANTAGED. THE REPORT RECOMMENDS (1) THE CONTINUED APPLICATION OF TITLE I FUNDS TO SUMMER SCHOOL PROGRAMS, (2) EXPANDED INSERVICE TRAINING OF TEACHERS, (3) THE DEPLOYMENT OF PRINCIPALS WHO UNDERSTAND THE NEEDS OF THE DISADVANTAGED, (4) THE DEVELOPMENT OF A STRENGTHENED ADVISORY ROLE FOR THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, AND (5) THE USE OF NONGOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS TO DEVELOP TEACHER INSERVICE TRAINING INSTITUTES. THE REPORT NOTES THAT A NEGRO CHILD WHO HAS BEEN TRANSFERRED TO A WHITE SCHOOL MAY BE CUT OFF FROM CERTAIN TITLE I BENEFITS, AND AT THE SAME TIME POINTS OUT THAT TITLE I FUNDING OF NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS MAY ENCOURAGE THE MAINTENANCE OF SCHOOL SEGREGATION. (DK)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM T
PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPIN
STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATIO
POSITION OR POLICY.

NEW YORK STATE TEACHERS ASSOCIATION

152 Washington Avenue • Albany, New York 12210

INFORMATION SERIES

Educational Opportunity Publication
February 15, 1967
(No. 66-67:C)

ED 020248

EXCERPTS FROM REPORT BY NATIONAL ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE EDUCATION OF DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN*

The National Advisory Council on the Education of Disadvantaged Children is making extensive observations of school programs aided by Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. This survey will be transmitted to the President and the U. S. Congress in the spring. On January 31, 1967, the Council sent a report containing some of their early observations and comments on areas of special concern to President Johnson, Vice-President Humphrey, and Speaker McCormick.

The sixth recommendation may be of greatest interest to persons involved in the NYSTA Equal Educational Opportunity Project. This recommendation says in part:

> "This may be the time for serious consideration of a role for the private sector in the mammoth yet elusive task of expanding the capacities of teachers of the disadvantaged... A possible avenue for a contribution by the private sector might be the development of teacher in-service training institutes, calling upon nationally recognized talent, the production of demonstration films, the training of seminar leaders, and the development of experience laboratories on a scale that only a very large city could dream of undertaking by itself. Such an institute might be moved from district to district, under direct contract with local school authorities. Universities, professional organizations, the new research organizations, and certain industrial and business corporations are among the types of agencies that might be enlisted in such enterprises."

UD 005 700

A substantial portion of the January 31, 1967 report of the National Advisory Council is reproduced below.

> **... the Council addresses itself not to a victory but to a problem as a main concern of this report; a problem which it expects to loom ever larger as involvement in the battle against educational disadvantage spreads. This problem has already attracted increasing discussion and is now coming into sharper focus. It is the problem of assisting a vast army of teachers and others who are trying to revise conventional classroom attitudes and curricula, and make them more effective in educating disadvantaged children.**

---

* O. Meredith Wilson, President of the University of Minnesota, is Chairman of the Council. The Council offices are located at 1900 E. Street, N.W., Washington, D. C. 20415.

Last November, the Council reported to the President:

> In distinguishing classrooms that favorably impressed our consultant-observers from those that appeared poor, the explanatory factor most frequently observed was the quality of relationship--the rapport--between teacher and child.... In speaking of this ingredient, the observers were not alluding merely to the techniques of teaching... (but to) the subtle aspects of mutual understanding, commonness of purpose and warm human contact.... If a crucial ingredient for changing the quality of education is the attitude of teachers...it follows that broad scale reorientation of teacher behavior should receive a high priority in the use of Title I funds.

A Crucial Task

The attitudes of teachers are crucial in improving the education of disadvantaged children. When teachers' attitudes for whatever reason are unsympathetic, negative, or discouraged, changing them is a most difficult task. If no more were required than an expanded number of workshops and seminars for the inservice training of teachers, the road to change would be relatively easy. But the problem cannot be solved from the outside alone and it will be most difficult to solve from the inside.

Typically, the attitudes of teachers reflect the attitudes of society. It is society, not its corps of teachers alone, which readily applies value judgments of "good" and "bad" to such common aspects of child behavior

as use of language, cleanliness, orderliness, management of time, diligence in lessons, and homework. Society, not its corps of teachers alone, is responsible when the poor are regarded as a burden rather than as persons deprived of opportunity. But while most members of society can, if they wish, avert their eyes from the poor while making negative judgments of them, the teacher cannot. He works where the children of the deprived make their first contact with the dominant culture of American society, and where the distinctions between having and not having are often painfully evident. An unfortunate community attitude toward the poor helps explain the attitude of some teachers, but it also underscores the need for public approval and praise for those who teach even the poorest with warmth and respect. The enormity and subtlety of this challenge is expressed by one of the Council's roving observers who, after witnessing inspiring as well as discouraging examples of local Title I efforts, wrote in his report:

> Inservice programs must be geared not alone to improving the knowledge of teachers about the disadvantaged, but to improving the feelings, values, and beliefs of teachers about themselves and about their relationships and responsibilities to the disadvantaged.

It is perhaps discouraging, but necessary, to observe that the structure of our educational system often inhibits internal efforts toward improvement. The teacher typically works in the hallowed privacy of a classroom.

When does one see another at work? Almost every sizeable school has at least one exceptionally talented teacher whose inspiration is a legend among the children as well as their parents. His talent and skill may spread in every direction--except to the teacher in the next room who is separated by an impenetrable wall of professional isolation. Where is the teacher to see great teaching? Other than that conducted by himself, the typical teacher has not extensively witnessed anyone teaching since his own days in college, where the art is not universally regarded as flourishing. So the teacher is likely to draw, at least in part, upon the memory of his own school days, using as models instructors who practiced by the standards of a generation ago--perhaps even two.

To give as one example of outdated teaching practice--granted, an extreme one: In a city of the Middle West, our consultant-observer was chatting with a first grade teacher about children who had been passed on to her from a Head Start class. The teacher declared, "These children just won't settle down and sit still. They think school should be fun, and it's taken us all fall to get that out of them."

But exposed to new experiences under new atmosphere, teachers may become more responsive to change. For example, many profited from the stimulating experiences in the summer schools aided by Title I in the past year. We defined some important factors in our previous report:

> Teachers were chosen more selectively; learning groups were smaller, often as few as ten children; there was de-emphasis of grades that label a student a failure; teachers were able to depart from prescribed texts and try new materials that encouraged student participation and progress at one's own pace. Perhaps it is simply the more relaxed atmosphere that melted barriers between teachers and pupils.

To these elements we might add the atmosphere of experimentation, which of necessity involved a give-and-take of ideas and sharing of experience among teachers. Summer schools proved to be schools of new experience for teachers as well as for pupils. Such valuable new experience, accompanied by fresh feelings of success with children, cannot be replaced by any number of lectures on teaching techniques.

A Search for New Methods

The Council urged last November that local school districts make generous plans for future summer schools using Title I aid. Based on early reports of the regular school year now coming in from our roving consultant-observers, the Council, with even greater confidence and emphasis, now renews that suggestion. These early reports indicate that where schools and school teachers have modified their regular school practices as a result of their summer school experience, the benefits are clearly apparent.

The Council does not necessarily recommend that all these practices be emulated elsewhere. What the Council heartily welcomes, however, is the apparent deep involvement of these teachers in re-examining old ideas, inventing new ones, testing them, and--most important of all--feeling a stake in arriving at new methods and attitudes they can believe in based on shared experience. One striking example appears in a report of an extensive language-arts enrichment program in a city in Florida. A major excerpt from our consultant-observer's report, illustrating the results of this experience, follows:

> The current program is a major refinement and extension of the initial summer program. In fact, it appears that the current program is doing a much more effective job than the tryout summer program did.
>
> This program is built on a belief that these children have a dearth of experiences which leads to language disability. It contends that the children need enriching activities more than they need drill. It holds that activities which extend the world of understanding cause children to become more involved in the academic learning process. As a result of the summer successes, teachers have suspended the use of language-arts workbooks. These books are now thought by these teachers to inhibit rather than facilitate the effective development of language-arts skills, reducing the activity to abstract exercises and impersonal markings.
>
> Teachers in this school conduct a verbal sharing period at the beginning of each day. As children tell their experiences, a volunteer program stenographer--sometimes a paid aide--takes the stories down in shorthand. She types these on a large-letter typewriter and runs off duplicate copies. Children

make books of their favorite stories, as composed orally by their classmates, and these become the basic texts for home reading and class recitation.

Excursions and field trips provide a wealth of special activities for extending children's understanding of the real world about them--and for providing material for classroom reports. In one class, the children had studied marine life in their oceanside region. Then, out of a large cardboard box they created an imitation seaquarium. They read about fish and drew pictures of them. They made cut-outs of their drawings, hung them on a string in the box, making the fish look as though they were swimming about in the tank. The room was full of stories about fish, displays of shells and surprisingly knowledgeable reports, written by the children. Finally, the class was visited by a marine biologist who brought a wealth of pictures and books which the children shared eagerly.

Another class simulated a U. S. Post Office. Children wrote letters to their friends as part of a writing and reading program. These letters were delivered throughout the school. Most of these children had never had the simple joy of receiving a letter addressed personally to them. To further enhance the pleasure of communication, some letters were shared with classmates by reading them aloud, thus providing a lively listening experience.

One class was making cookies as I visited. The language-arts value of this experience was clear as I listened to children verbalize how cookies are made, what is done in mixing the dough, rolling it out, cutting the cookies, placing them on the cookie sheet, decorating them with colored sugar toppings, baking them in the school kitchen and, best of all, eating them. I was invited to cut a cookie. As I reached for the cookie cutter, a small Negro boy told me, "You have to wash your hands first." When I asked why, he said, "If you get the dirt on your hands in the cookies they won't be good to eat." A little girl piped up, "It might make us sick." I washed my hands at once and praised them for this good idea.

These activities had been introduced by a special corps of language-arts program teachers. When they visited classrooms, they worked together with regular classroom teachers. Thus the teaching experience was spread and, hopefully, became part of the regular classroom pattern--part of the regular teacher's new outlook and technique. The special-program teachers try not to direct children in what to do. Rather, they ask, "How shall we solve this? What should we do now?" Thus, children are given a chance to think out answers to common problems and to develop logical thinking. Simple experiences thus provide wonderful opportunities for word learning, conceptual development, organizing words to communicate ideas and tying ideas together into meaningful sequences. How much better than a workbook!

Teachers told me they are urged to leave their rooms for short periods several times a day after the children's work is organized. This is to offer children an opportunity to develop self-control and self-direction of their activities. I walked into one classroom and found the teacher gone. The children paid little heed to me. They were busily engaged in their work, talking at a normal conversational level. They moved about the room freely, without conflict or confusion. These children had apparently internalized some important elements of self-control.

Recommendations for Action

The Council has now conducted extensive observationsof summer programs and is at present collecting observations of the still-young year of regular school programs. With regard to assisting teachers and others to discover effective new attitudes with disadvantaged children, these observations lead the Council to suggest that educators at all levels give consideration to any or all of the following possible courses of action:.

1. A continued emphasis on use of Title I funds for summer

projects, especially if they are designed to broaden children's opportunities for doing things, going places, and talking, writing, and reading about the activities that interest them most; to encourage experimentation by teachers, especially if they can plan the experiments together, criticize and revise them together, sharing the positives and negatives of their experiences at every opportunity. An underlying but major purpose of such summer experimental activity should be the modification of school practice during the regular school year.

2. A new emphasis by local superintendents and principals on identifying teachers who are successful with the disadvantaged and on opening their classrooms as learning laboratories for other teachers. Through imaginative deployment of teacher aides and substitutes, teachers may be freed to spend worthwhile hours in such learning laboratories by observing and working with master teachers of the disadvantaged. When accompanied by such practical experience, workshops and seminars may become more valuable tools for spreading the techniques of success than they have been in the past.

3. Expanded use of demonstration classrooms, demonstration schools, and demonstration subsystems for expanding the experiences of teachers as well as children. A major organizational component of such demonstration units should be provision for <u>transferring in</u> teachers from other disadvantaged schools for experience-training alongside master teachers, then <u>transferring out</u> these teachers into the general system. The value of such experience-training would be enhanced if teachers strongly motivated to work with the disadvantaged are encouraged to maintain informal association for continuing exchange and discussion of experiences.

4. Greater vigilance by school boards and superintendents to insure that principals of schools of the disadvantaged are selected for their inclination to encourage teachers in experimenting, sharing experiences, and perhaps upsetting old applecarts. Time and again, our consultant-observers report coming upon principals whose understanding of the needs of the disadvantaged is less than that of the teachers. Lacking understanding, some create atmospheres that stifle initiative and creative thinking. Accomplishment of

widespread self-change by teachers is difficult enough. Without cooperation and leadership by principals, it appears virtually impossible. In every district the most imaginative and effective principals should be identified and given high visibility. Their leadership is a critical element in their own schools and in the community.

5. Development of a strengthened advisory role for the Federal Government in disseminating the local experience of Title I teachers and administrators, yet one which would not encroach upon local initiative and control. The Council's consultant-observers, in their current second round of visitations to local projects, were taken quite by surprise by the frequency of invitations to stay a little longer so they might tell of worthwhile observations in other places. Universally, they detected a growing hunger for information, for the spreading of experience, for advice from firsthand observers of trial-and-error and trial-and-success by others. This suggests that more than ordinary profit might be gained if teams of roving consultant-observer-advisors were established to help disseminate, on a face-to-face basis, reports of useful Title I experience. Such teams might well

include some of the most successful teachers and principals "borrowed" from their home districts for temporary service.

6. This may be the time for serious consideration of a role for the private sector in the mammoth yet elusive task of expanding the capacities of teachers of the disadvantaged. While this suggestion may seem novel, it is hardly without precedent. Nongovernmental organizations are rich in the experience of effective training for many kinds of leadership. Education has long relied upon them, for example, for initiative in development and publication of basic curriculum materials, chiefly textbooks. A possible avenue for a contribution by the private sector might be the development of teacher inservice training institutes, calling upon nationally recognized talent, the production of demonstration films, the training of seminar leaders, and the development of experience laboratories on a scale that only a very large city could dream of undertaking by itself. Such an institute might be moved from district to district, under direct contract with local school authorities. Universities,

professional associations, the new research organizations, and certain industrial and business corporations are among the types of agencies that might well be enlisted in such enterprises.

Progress and Problems

In making these criticisms and proposals, the Council does so with the realization that, during the short history of special concern for education of the disadvantaged, each year has reflected important progress over the last...

3. As racial desegregation of schools progresses, reports made to the Council indicate that insufficient planning results in some impoverished Negro children being cut off from the benefits of important programs that may exist in their former, segregated schools financed by Title I. For example, a Negro child, if transferred to a predominantly white school, may find no free-lunch program. Thus, he is desegregated--but hungry again. If his teacher and principal have not been prepared for the special education problems this newly transferred student brings to his new surroundings, he may find that he has traded a ghettoed world for an unsympathetic one in which he is required to

compete unfairly--hardly a favorable circumstance for effective learning. Some of our reports contain instances of these and other troublesome consequences of poorly planned desegregation. A major new area for vigilance and administrative care is that of insuring that special educational services follow the eligible child who is transferred under a school desegregation program.

4. At the same time, attention should be directed to the possibility that in concentrating special attention upon the disadvantaged, many of whom are Negroes, the local administration of Title I programs could have the effect of encouraging the maintenance of segregation. Further thought will have to be directed to devising ways of meeting the special needs of disadvantaged children of racial minorities while simultaneously promoting every possible means of bringing them into the mainstream of American childhood and American society.